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The Danish Railroad Situation (1940-1944)

4 June 1940: In negotiations conducted in May 1940 between Denmark and Germany suggested that Denmark agree to place 1,000 gondola cars at Germany's disposal for the transport of coal for Denmark from the German mines to the export ports. The Danes objected on these grounds: (1) Denmark only had 4,500 such gondola cars, of which she had already given Germany 500 and (2) if 1,000 gondola cars were to be taken away, the gondola car park would be inadequate to cope with the ever-increasing load imposed by the Danish domestic economy. The Germans went along with this, feeling that the needs of both Denmark and Germany would be better served if the cars were to remain in Denmark.

15 August 1940: The difficulties in the furnishing of railroad cars has not improved. The main reason is the great load placed on the Jylland railroads by Air Force shipments and German shipments to Norway. Frequent tie-ups in traffic at the Aalborg railroad station take place because it is often not possible to make shipments according to plan to the shipping port of Frederikshavn.

The quota of structural steel for 100 of the 400 boxcars, the order for which the Danish State Railroads has placed with the "A/SVognfabrikken Scandia", Randers, is being delivered at present. The quota for the other 300 cars has not yet been released. 1,500 tons of structural steel are involved, which are even more urgently required because the German Reichsbahn intends to transfer an order for the manufacture of 300 "Omm" cars to "Scandia".

15 October 1940: The number of freight cars requested could in no way be furnished. On 25 September, the Danish sugar plant campaign began: the transport of sugar beets has top priority. Added to that are extensive shipments of straw and grain. At present, a daily average of 550 freight cars cannot be furnished. The order for 300 "Omm" cars has been placed with "Scandia".

- 1 -

SECRET

SECRET

The construction of these can start only after the delivery of the 300 freight cars currently under construction for the Danish State Railroads. 1,000 tons of the requisite 1,500 tons of structural steel for this construction order has been released. Negotiations on the remaining 500 tons are still in progress.

15 November 1940: The Danish State Railroads suffers from a shortage of heavy freight train locomotives. The German Reichsbahn several months ago loaned 6 of its heavy locomotives to Denmark. At present, the Danish State Railroads has 4 locomotives on order with A/S Frichs, Aarhus. These are still under construction and their completion will be delayed because the requisite 33.5 tons of heavy plate have not been delivered. As the German Reichsbahn urgently needs the 6 locomotives it has loaned out and, moreover, intends to place orders with A/S Frichs for locomotives when the four for the Danish State Railroads have been completed, it is in Germany's interest to see to it that the 33.5 tons of heavy plate are delivered as soon as possible.

The Danish State Railroads has placed an order for a very efficient icebreaker with the Odense Staalskibsvaerft. This icebreaker, which in addition to freight will transport 100 passengers and simultaneously will tow ferry boats when the ice is heavy, is needed to maintain traffic between the Danish islands and the mainland in the winter. In order that this icebreaker may be placed in service by the winter of 1941/42, it is necessary that the Danish State Railroads be provided with a supplementary quota of about 1,600 tons of steel within the next four months.

The applications for cars could in no way be met in October. An average of 511 cars per day cannot be provided. Thus far there have been no difficulties in the procurement of cars for German-Danish traffic, particularly for armament shipments.

In connection with the planned German-Danish traffic route Copenhagen-Fehmarn-Hamburg, the Danes began the preliminary work for the expansion of the sector Vordingborg-Rødby (Laaland) in October.

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

15 December 1940: Thus far, the German Reichsbahn has placed orders only for railroad cars. The planned order for locomotives, to be placed with A/S Frichs, Aarhus, is still hanging in mid-air. It is to be hoped that the placement of orders will be accelerated, as the Frichs firm, anticipating this order for weeks, has now turned to other jobs.

Since 1 November, the freight car loading points for shipments by water to Stavanger and the ports north thereof have been the transshipment ports of Aalborg and Nørre Sundby. Oslo is also serviced from there.

The furnishing of railroad cars for intra-Danish traffic has been somewhat more favorable in November than heretofore. Nonetheless, there is a daily shortage of 417 cars.

15 January 1941: The partial rerouting of shipments to Norway by way of Warnemünde-Gedser-Helsingør-Hälsingborg, by way of Sassnitz-Trelleborg, and by way of Stettin, has served to lighten the load borne by the railroads in northern Jylland. The heavy freight traffic Jylland-Sjælland across the Store Bælt could not be handled by the Nyborg-Korsør ferry. The pile-up of railroad cars in and before Nyborg reached an all-time high of 990 cars on 12 December. Special measures reduced the backlog to 240 cars by 13 January.

The daily shortage of railroad cars for intra-Danish traffic amounted on the average to 386 in December, compared to 417 in November.

For the transport of Danish workers from Germany to Denmark for the Christmas vacations, 12 special north-bound trains and 10 special south-bound trains were arranged. These were only 50 percent used as many workers preferred the regularly scheduled trains.

In order to ease the difficulties in the furnishing of railroad cars, the Danish State Railroads has placed orders for 300 new freight cars: 50 meat cars, 125 boxcars, and 125 gondola cars. Moreover, the firm A/S Frichs received orders for 6 electric locomotives and 6 shunting locomotives of the largest type. As the completion of this railroad equipment is planned for

- 3 -

SECRET

SECRET

the fiscal year of 1941/42, any easing up of the demand for rolling stock cannot be figured on before the end of 1941.

The closing of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal has necessitated the rerouting of coal shipments to Denmark to Esbjerg. The coal is unloaded there and piled up. It remains to be seen how the distribution of coal for all of Denmark on the overloaded rail net from Esbjerg will work out.

The German Reichsbahn has authorized the shipment of freight from Denmark via Germany and the occupied areas of France to Spain and Portugal.

The Danish Minister of Commerce has presented a bill in the Landsting providing for a change in the naval warfare insurance law for freight to cover freight shipped overland (railroad) and by air.

15 February 1941: The severe cold and the frequent snowfalls have affected ferry and rail traffic considerably; delays in the entire rail and ferry traffic (up to 6 times the normal, scheduled travelling time) and interruptions (so far of only short duration) have resulted.

Danish coastal traffic, with the exception of that on the West coast of Jylland, has ceased for the most part. The Gedser-Warnemünde ferry has been overloaded, due to the handling of furloughed German troops, from Norway by the Sassnitz-Trelleborg ferry.

Due to the transport of peat, the volume of rail traffic in 1940 was greater than that of 1939.

The number of freight cars furnished in January 1941 was 62,232.

A daily average of 355 freight cars could not be furnished.

23 February 1943: The fortification program on the west coast of Denmark has had a very adverse effect on rail traffic.

Large-scale shipments of construction materials, almost exclusively in German rolling stock (Danish rolling stock cannot be provided), have heavily burdened the traffic situation.

- 4 -
SECRET

50X1-HUM

SECRET

150 freight cars are furnished daily for this activity, the number gradually to be increased to 350.

The effects of this large withdrawal of rolling stock, while not yet perceptible, must surely be cut back the volume of other freight shipments. Unless, much of this transportation can be handled by ship, the rail transportation system will be in a highly precarious position.

The lines in Jylland, especially around Aalborg and Aarhus are under great strain because of the fortifications construction materials shipments. Because of the shortage of the means of transportation at the train unloading points, the unloading of the trains progresses very slowly.

The German Reichsbahn will lend out 12 locomotives to ease the situation.

70 cars daily are made available for supply shipments to Norway and Finland via Sweden [by Sweden].

The freight car requirement for the Armed Forces is 95 percent covered, that of the civil sector (without trip numbers) about 50 percent.

The coal supply of the Danish State Railroads is extremely critical. The reserve on hand will last only for 14 days.

5 March 1943: The freight car requirement for the Armed Forces is 95 percent covered, that of the civil sector, 50 percent.

50X1-HUM

15 March 1943: The number of freight cars furnished for inter-Danish traffic in February amounted to 57,813, or 2,409 per work day. An average number of 307 cars per day could not be furnished.

50X1-HUM

27 March 1943: At present, 250 freight cars per day loaded with fortifications construction materials are being sent to the west coast of Denmark. The

- 5 -

SECRET

SECRET

applications for freight space are currently very great. 300 cars are needed for the transport of fish from Hirtshals to Germany.

About 20 percent of the fortification construction materials are to be shipped by boat, if the tonnage is available.

Of the 12 locomotives promised by the Reichsbahn, only 3 are currently in use. The other 9 have not arrived yet.

The coal situation for the railroads is critical. An additional 5,000 tons had to be withdrawn from the stocks to maintain railroad operations.

50X1-HUM

3 April 1943: Two of the four ferries trafficking the Warnemünde-Gedser ferry route are undergoing repairs, which has caused a certain pile-up of freight cars. These have been rerouted via Flensburg. The Malmö-Copenhagen ferry is in operation; it bears Armed Forces freight to Finland and civilian freight to Sweden. As before, 70 freight cars daily are allotted for this.

The furnishing of railroad cars in Denmark satisfied 95 percent of the Armed Forces requirement and about 50 percent of the civilian requirement.

4 May 1943: As of 1 May 1943, only 60 freight cars will be furnished for fresh supplies, 30 for Norway and 30 for Finland. The freight car requirement of the German Armed Forces in Denmark was covered completely, that for the Danish civilian sector only half covered.

5 May 1943: The fortifications program on the west coast of Denmark is progressing at a highly accelerated rate. The transport of construction materials and other transportation, as before, takes place in German rolling stock. The number of cars furnished daily for this activity is 380, so the trackage utilized for the fortification of the west coast is under a heavy strain. Moreover, a special program calling for the daily shipment of 80 carloads of gravel, to be transhipped from the freeport of Copenhagen, must be readied.

The Warnemünde-Gedser-Copenhagen-Helsingør railroad sector is being operated at peak capacity.

- 6 -

SECRET

SECRET

The load on the Jylland railroads, especially in the fortified areas, is extremely heavy.

21 June 1943: The freight car requirement of the Armed Forces was covered completely, that of the Danish civil sector only 30 percent.

3 June 1943: The fortifications program continues. 400 German freight cars per day are used for the transport of construction materials. Only 60 instead of 80 freight cars were provided for the special [gravel] transportation program previously mentioned.

Denmark has requested 3 locomotives to ease the transportation situation in Jylland.

The Armed Forces' railroad car requirement has been met 100 percent, that of the civil sector, however, only 30 percent.

50X1-HUM

21 July 1943: The Armed Forces railroad car requirement has been met 100 percent, that of the civil sector, however, only 30 percent.

20 August 1943: As above, 100 percent and 30 percent.

At present, peat and lignite shipments are the most urgent in Denmark.

21 September 1943: As above, 100 percent and 30 percent.

60 freight cars are still being provided daily for fresh supply shipments to Norway and Finland.

A fixed quota of travel passes is being issued to limit express passenger travel.

50X1-HUM

31 March 1944: The burden on the entire transportation system did not lighten in February. The transportation space required for Armed Forces shipments was at the same level as in the previous month.

freight cars furnished: applied for per day - 5,377

furnished 3,728

uncovered requirement 1,649

- 7 -

SECRET

SECRET

40 cars per day are provided for the shipment of supplies to Norway and Finland via Sweden.

3 May 1944: There was no improvement in the transportation system during March. The freight space required for the Armed Forces on Jylland increased. At the same time, shipments of supplies to Norway by water and by highway increased. The increased freight space requirement is caused by the construction projects of the Air Force and the Organisation Todt on Jylland and Fyn.

The Armed Forces freight space requirement was 100 percent covered, the civil freight space requirement only 35 percent.

Applications per day	6,137 cars
Railroad cars furnished	3,759 "
Uncovered requirement	2,378 "

15 May 1944: The entire transportation situation throughout April was still extremely tense. A 30 percent increase in troop shipments over the previous month to Jylland and the Reich took place.

The Armed Forces railroad car requirement was met completely, the civil requirement only 50 percent.

Applications per day	5,671 cars
Railroad cars furnished	3,877 "
Uncovered requirement	1,794 "

Civil traffic over Warnemünde/Gedser, because the ferry "Schwerin" is not in operation, has been severely cutback. Only two ferries will travel this route for a long time to come, and civil freight to the Scandinavian countries can be shipped only to a limited extent. The quota for this amounts to 26 cars per day.

15 August 1944: The transportation situation was normal during July, except for Greater Copenhagen, where there was a general strike from 30 June to 3 July. By 5 July traffic was flowing normally again.

The deliveries of cement to Jylland were at the same level as during the previous month. Twenty cars daily have been made available for gravel deliveries.

- 8 -

SECRET

SECRET

The shipment of supplies to Norway and Finland via Sweden is about 10 percent in arrears. Forty cars daily were assigned for these shipments during July. The Armed Forces freight space requirement during July was 95 percent covered, the civil freight space requirement 50 percent covered.

Applications per day	4,799 cars
Railroad cars furnished	3,813 "
Uncovered requirement	1,986 " [sic]

15 September 1944: Cement deliveries to Jylland were at the same level as in the previous month, but gravel shipments dropped off somewhat. Armed Forces supply shipments to Norway and Finland were at the same level as during the previous month. Forty cars daily are made available for these deliveries.

In August 1944, the Armed Forces freight space requirement was 100 percent covered, the civil freight requirement 55 percent.

Applications per day	6,685 cars
Railroad cars furnished	3,952 "
Uncovered requirement	2,733 "

50X1-HUM

15 October 1944: The Swedish Government has discontinued transit traffic to Norway and Finland. In view of the fact that the 40 railroad cars daily are no longer available, 180,000 additional tons of shipping space (water) will be required to supply Norway and Finland.

The freight space requirement of the Armed Forces could be met only 70 percent, the civil freight space requirement only 50 percent.

- 9 -

SECRET